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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE



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Soviets Meet with  
Syrian Foreign Minister

Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam's visit to the USSR last week marked a continuation of Moscow's efforts to prepare for a resumption of the Geneva conference.

The communique issued at the end of the visit, however, left unclear whether the Soviets were able to make substantial progress on Geneva with the Syrians, particularly over the issue of PLO representation. The Syrians have been strong advocates of early participation at Geneva by an independent Palestine Liberation Organization delegation. Although the Soviets have supported the "equal" participation of PLO representatives, they have been ambiguous about the timing of Palestinian attendance and have kept open the possibility that the PLO will become part of another delegation.

The Palestinian issue will be discussed during the visit to Moscow of a PLO delegation headed by Yasir Arafat, which began yesterday. In addition, Gromyko is apparently planning a trip to the Middle East next month to continue discussions on Geneva.

The Syrian-Soviet communique was markedly warmer on bilateral issues than the one issued after Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi's visit last week. In what may be an effort to signal their continued displeasure with Cairo, the Soviets once again stated their commitment to building Syrian military strength and praised Syria's political policies.

The four-day trip to Damascus by Soviet Chief of Staff Kulikov--which coincided with Khaddam's

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stay in Moscow--may have been designed to underscore continuing Soviet military support at a time when Moscow was pressing Khaddam on Geneva. Kuli-kov met with President Asad and Syrian military leaders and probably checked on how Damascus is employing Moscow's substantial military aid.

It is likely that Syria's dispute with Iraq over the waters of the Euphrates River was discussed in Moscow. [redacted] Premier Kosygin assured Iraqi strong man Saddam Husayn during his recent visit to Moscow that the Soviets would bring up the matter with the Syrians. [redacted]

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Soviets Speak Up Against the Hegemony  
Clause in Japan-China Treaty

The Soviets have inveighed against the prospective Japan-China peace and friendship treaty with signed commentaries in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. Moscow seems reconciled to the conclusion of a treaty, but it is trying to stiffen Japanese opposition to the inclusion of a reference to "anti-hegemony" that is patently directed at the Soviets.

The commentaries are tough on the Chinese and --given the fact that Moscow would prefer that Tokyo not sign any treaty with China until it is willing to sign one with the USSR--relatively easy on the Japanese. The Soviets charge that Chinese leaders have admitted that the Soviet Union is the target of the hegemony language, and that Peking's purpose is to cover its own designs and to drive a wedge between the USSR and Japan. The commentaries praise Japanese leaders who are sensitive to the real purposes of the Chinese and are resisting the hegemony language in the treaty.

The timing and tone of these commentaries suggest that Moscow sees some hope that Tokyo will be able at least to water down the treaty's language. The Soviets probably believe, with some justification, that their strong representations in Tokyo against the treaty have caused the Japanese to take a tougher stand in the talks than they would have otherwise. Even if Tokyo capitulates, the Soviets would have helped create a controversial issue between the two countries and would have the Japanese on the defensive when they deal with Moscow. The Soviets might also press the Japanese to make amends by supporting Moscow's Asian security concept, which the Soviets will probably dust off before very long as their contribution to the political adjustments under way in East Asia.

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Grechko Discusses World War II

Defense Minister Grechko, in an article appearing in the March 1975 issue of *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, attempts to clarify four major contradictions the Soviets face in trying to project their version of the causes and the course of World War II. While it breaks little new ground, the article is the most detailed and authoritative statement of its type to emerge during the publicity for the "Great Thirtieth" celebrations. The four contradictions are: 1) the wartime alliance with the Western imperialist powers, 2) the non-aggression pact with Germany, 3) the repression and privation of the 1930s in the USSR, and 4) the Soviet role in the war against Japan.

Grechko grapples first with the complex problem of explaining how imperialism could be at once the enemy and the ally of the Soviet Union. He explains this in standard class terms: the "people" sided with the Soviets, while the exploiters were for the Germans. The ruling circles of the imperialist powers, he writes, saw German fascism as their class ally in the struggle against the Soviet Union. "However complex and contradictory international relations in the capitalist world were in the 1930s," he continues, "it remains an indisputable fact that other imperialist powers, directly or indirectly, invested effort and money in the preparation of aggression against the USSR and the creation of the German fascist army." The policy of appeasement practiced by the imperialists served the same end, he claims. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was doing all it could to avert war and was trying to arrange an international alliance against Germany. These overtures were rebuffed, however, because the imperialists saw socialism, not fascism, as their main enemy. When the Western powers' calculated attempts to direct Germany's

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aggression against the USSR failed and they found themselves instead victims of the German army, they were unable to offer effective resistance and fell one by one to Hitler's forces. This gave Germany the economic base from which to launch an attack against the Soviet Union--the primary target all along--and the Soviet Union and the Western powers became allies.

Grechko then attempts a detailed explanation of the need for the repression and privation in the Soviet Union during the 1930s, a need which he asserts was directly related to war preparations. Bearing in mind Lenin's dictum about being encircled by hostile forces, the Soviet Union was aware of the risk of war and took the necessary measures during the prewar period to build up an economic, military, moral, and political base of defense. Soviet domestic policy of the 1930s--collectivization, liquidation of the exploiting classes, the uniting of the disparate nationalities of the USSR and other measures--were directed to this end and made it possible for the USSR to embark on a fundamental technical restructuring of the Soviet armed forces and their armament.

This process, Grechko explains, took time, and it was therefore necessary to try to delay the start of a war that was becoming "increasingly inevitable." In this situation, the only recourse was to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany, which gave the USSR two vital years to build up the country's defenses.

Grechko addresses himself to the fourth contradiction, the Soviet role in the war against Japan, in terms somewhat more straightforward than previous Soviet statements, including his own. He notes that the Soviet Union entered the war against Japan only in August 1945, and he does not make the

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usual claim that the Soviet Union defeated militarist Japan. He does, however, ignore the US-Japanese war in the Pacific, saying only that the Soviet army and the Mongolians defeated the Japanese Kwangtung army. In an ambiguous formulation, he states that the Soviets estimate "at their true worth" the contributions of the peoples of the USA, Great Britain, France, Canada and other countries who fought the Germans.

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Nominations of Leaders to  
Republic Supreme Soviets

The results of the first day of nominations of candidates for election to republic Supreme Soviets were published by *Pravda* on April 25. The ranking of Politburo members according to number of nominating districts indicates little change in status following the Central Committee plenum that dropped Shelepin from the leadership. Brezhnev leads with nominations from 16 electoral districts. Podgorny and Kosygin are tied for second place with 10; Suslov and Kirilenko have three each; and the other leaders all have one.

The distance between Brezhnev's score and that of Podgorny and Kosygin is not quite as great as in *Pravda's* first day of reporting on last year's nominations to the USSR Supreme Soviet. Nevertheless, coverage of Brezhnev's candidacy overwhelms all others. Pictures of meetings in electoral districts carried by all central newspapers but one show only Brezhnev's portrait being held up by enthusiastic supporters. (The Moscow Oblast paper shows Brezhnev's portrait out in front, flanked by those of Podgorny and Kosygin.) Brezhnev's name appears first in the accounts of meetings in each republic.

Nominations of top leaders are honorary in all cases but one. The ratio established by *Pravda* on its first day of reporting is generally maintained throughout the nomination campaign. The central and republic press will continue to publish reports of these honorary nominations during the next couple of weeks. Election day is June 15.

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Following is a tabulation of the number of district nominations for each leader as initially reported by *Pravda* this year and last year:

	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
Brezhnev	21	16
Kosygin	11	10
Podgorny	11	10
Suslov	4	3
Kirilenko	4	3
Andropov	2	1
Grechko	2	1
Gromyko	2	1
Grishin	2	1
Kulakov	2	1
Kunayev	2	1
Mazurov	2	1
Pelshe	2	1
Polyansky	2	1
Shcherbitsky	2	1
Shelepin	2	

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Soviet Official Discusses European  
Security Talks

Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Kovalev last week complained to the US ambassador to the European security talks that the US had switched from a policy of cooperation to confrontation on conference issues. Kovalev's statements betray Moscow's desire for a quick conclusion to the conference, and its anxiety that the remaining substantive issues could delay their schedule.

Kovalev was particularly critical of US behavior on "Basket III" (human contacts) issues, accusing the US of suddenly taking a tougher position than that of its allies. He also complained about US lack of support for the Soviet concept of providing advance notification of military maneuvers only on a voluntary basis.

The Soviets are concerned that the US will, in concert with the other Western participants, push for meaningful Soviet concessions on such issues as journalist's rights, the establishment of reading rooms, and the unimpeded broadcasts of radio and television into the East. So far, Soviet concessions have been sufficiently vague as to have little binding effect, or as in the case of the so-called "confidence-building measures," have been explicitly labeled as "voluntary."

Other items on the conference agenda have been resolved favorably for Moscow. The list of principles of interstate relations, including a statement on the inviolability of frontiers that the Soviets sought, is now virtually complete.

While the Soviet-proposed date of June 30 for the final stage of the conference has not been formally accepted, there is general agreement that

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the present working phase of the conference should end this summer. There is also a growing consensus that the final meeting should take place at the summit level, as the Soviets have long desired.

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Bosnia-Hercegovina Party  
Divided on Cominformists

The politically sensitive issue of how to punish some prestigious war veterans who have become entangled with Cominformists is plaguing the party leadership in Sarajevo.

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Mikulic is caught in the middle. Some officials argue for a "humane" treatment of Mandzic and company, while others want severe punishment. So far, Mikulic appears to be following Tito's orders, but not without risks to stability in the Bosnian party.

A plenum in Sarajevo on April 18 heard Mikulic's deputy, Hasan Grabcanovic, attack the Cominformists as a "Trojan horse" within the organization. Grabcanovic also taunted Mikulic by expressing mock regret that the republic's leadership was not sufficiently "mobilized" to "chase into the open" the Cominformist faction.

X1A The partisans are particularly strong in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Mikulic, already under fire for his earlier plans to try Mandzic, must find a way to mollify them without having the Sarajevo party labeled "soft" on Cominformists. One military officer who recently visited Sarajevo said the situation there is "very bad," and there are rumors that the federal party leadership views the Mikulic regime as unsound.

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